



**The Raoul Follereau Foundation (Malta) - The Order of Charity**  
**is a registered NGO [No. VO/0980]**  
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**Grand Priory of the Maltese Islands**  
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**Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem**

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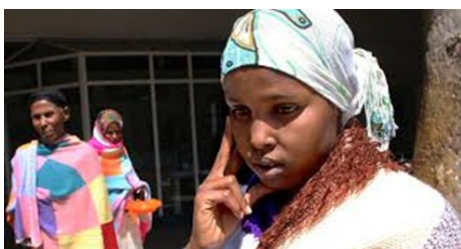
RAOUL FOLLEREAU FOUNDATION (MALTA): NGO NO. VO/0980

# Order of Charity Newsletter

## EDITORIAL

L-istorja ta' Zukelha hija tipika għan-nisa f'qar tal-Indja. Missierha kien ibati bit-tuberkulożi u miet bil-kancer. Hija kienet imġiegħla tiżżewweġ ta' ħmistax-il sena u wara sena kellha tarbija. It-tarbija mietet wara sitt xhur, żewġha telaqha u ommu keċċietha l'barra biex tittallab fit-toroq.

L-unika ħaġa li mhux tas-soltu f'din l-istorja hija li żewġha telaqha għax mardet. Hija tfaċċatilha l-



lebbra, li għalkemm m'għadhiex komuni ħafna fl-indja, skont il-liġijiet tal-pajjiż din tista' twassal għad-divorzju.

"Jiena issa mfejqa," tgħid Zukelha li illum għandha 28 sena, "għax kelli x-xorti li nsib rimedju kmieni. Izda meta żewġi ra d-dbabar bojod fuq wiċċi, fuq minkbejja u dahri kien jaf li kienet il-lebbra. Meta t-tabib ikkonferma l-marda, żewġi kellimni ħazin għax qal li ma wrejtux li kelli l-marda qabel iżżewwiġtu." Gisimha issa m'għandu l-ebda sinjali tal-marda izda

żewġha sata' jiddivorzja minħabba l-liġi tal-1898 li kienet tissepara l-lebbri biex il-marda ma tinxterid. Jeżistu 14-il liġi oħra fil-pajjiż li kollha jiddeskriminaw kontra l-lebbri. "Dawn il-morda jiġu divorzjati, jitilfu l-impieg tagħhom, ma jithallewx jidhlu fil-banek u jitkeċċew minn fuq il-karozzi u l-ferroviji," jgħid wieħed li jaħdem mal-Leprosy mission. "L-istigma u l-biża' mil-lebbra tant huma qawwija li dawn il-morda ma jsibu l-ebda ħni-ena." Skont il-WHO, nofs il-kazijiet godda tal-lebbra fid-dinja huma fl-indja.

Għalkemm instabet il-kura, il-villagġi fl-indja għadhom ma jaċċettawx il-morda, li jkollhom imorru jgħixu f'kolonji tal-lebbri. Hafna hu-

ma dawk li jaħsbu li għandhom il-marda u li jibzghu jmorru fl-isptarijiet għax ma jridux jiġu mwarrba minn qrabathom u l-ħbieb. fi sptar tal-leprosy mission ikollhom mal-mitejn pazjent fil-gimgha. Fis-sala għall-aġar fost il-pazjenti, l-irġiel ipoġġu fuq is-sodod b'idejhom jew saqajhom maqtuġhin. Xi wħud minnhom m'għandhomx im-nieher. izda almenu jsibu min jieħu ħsiebhom u jagħmlilhom il-qalb.

"Fi żmien sentejn, l-indja se tiċċelebra s-70 anniversarju minn mindu ħadet l-indipendenza mill-ingilterra,"

**ĠESÙ, HENN GĦALL-  
IMSEJKNA LEBBRUŻI LI FTIT  
ISIBU ĦNIENA.**



qal wieħed mill-uffiċjali tal-Leprosy mission. "Jalla tkun okkażjoni biex titneħħa din il-liġi kiefra kontra miżżewġin affettati bil-marda tal-lebra."

CHEV. TONY C. CUTAJAR

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Ruzar Briffa was a Maltese dermatologist, a poet and a major figure in Maltese literature. He was born on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1906 and died on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1963.

Briffa in 1924 started studying Medicine at the Royal University of Malta and received the Strachan Travelling Scholarship which he used in completion of his studies in London Institute of Dermatology. Ruzar was also involved in pro-Maltese Politics and cofounded the University Maltese Library Society, from which remains active today. He started publishing publishing nationalist poems and editing the Society's Journal and Voice of the Maltese ( Lehen is-Sewwa).

In 1931 he became a doctor and continued to specialize in dermatology, but most of all skin diseases. 7 years later he was appointed as Leprosy Control Officer in Malta and got his first-hands on experience in the treatment of Leprosy while studying at the Calcutta School of Tropical Medicine and while visiting numerous leprosaria in India.

He became a Physician to St Bartholomew Leper Hospital in 1944 and kept up to date on the latest progress in leprosy treatments. He used his knowledge of the new and advanced treatment protocols to improve the lives of the in-house. He fought

against Malta's forced isolation of lepers and this led to the regulation being eliminated in 1953.

He was appointed Senior Consultant in 1950 on skin diseases at the Central Hospital and Chambray Hospital. He was nominated Honorary Skin diseases Specialist in the Mata Wart Memorial Hospital for Children. He also taught Dermatology and Venerology at the University of Malta where he did this until his death in 1963.

He was known for his kindness especially when dealing with his patients and his experience with leprosy informed his poetry. His poetry often expresses the sadness on human suffering and his wish to beautify the disfigured patients suffering from leprosy.

In 1973, the St Bartholmew Leper Hospital was renamed after him, Sptar Ruzar Briffa, in recognition of his role in fight against leprosy disease in Malta. The Government issued a postage stamp in his honour in 1980.

## RUZAR BRIFFA



### La Mmut

La mmut,  
Dix-xewqa biss . . .

Idfnumi 'l bogħ'd 'il bogħ'd,  
Fejn qalb l-ibhra tirtogh'd  
Hiemda, serħana,  
Għax mal-art le tmiss.

Xejn iżjed, xejn . . .

Ma rridx dmiġħ il-ghajnejn  
Ixarrab fuqi  
Bl-ipokrisija,  
Mhux talb  
Barra mill-qalb;  
Mhux xama', ward,  
B'leħha qasira,  
'Mma l-ghanja tal-ghanji  
Li għanniet  
Mill-qedem nett  
Gol-baħar  
L-Armonija  
Allija.



16.01.1906 - 22.02.1963

**gmu**  
għaqda tal-malti  
università • 1931

## Leprosy in India

Leprosy seems to be a disease of the past, but today it impacts over 5 million people world-wide. There are about 350,000 new cases a year, mostly in India and surrounding Southeast Asian countries. Globally over 3 million people are permanently disabled as a result of leprosy. Leprosy affects the skin, peripheral nerves, respiratory tract, and the eyes. The disease has a devastating impact on the victim. Highly-effective multi-drug therapy is available and elimination of the disease is possible, but often, lepers can't get the treatment themselves.

The effects on leprosy victims are very harsh, and include social isolation, poverty, weakened immune systems, and permanent disability. Victims need the most basic things, such as food, water, and shelter. Even after treatment for leprosy, victims continue to be isolated in the colonies due to social taboos and fears that permeate the culture. Once confined to a leprosy village, reentering society is nearly impossible. Lepers are forced to live in colonies where they don't have homes, enough food for their families and are unable to get jobs. Imagine entire families

forced to live in poverty because of this rare disease.

The Little Lights home is located on the outskirts of Chennai and is home to 34 children

## The Little Lights Home

whose family members live in leper colonies. The vision of the Little Lights staff is to take in children who are often neglected or at high risk, and give them a loving home, a good education, and hope for the future. Their dream is by 2020 to see these children become doctors, lawyers, and skilled professionals. Then, they can break the cycle of generations of lepers in their families. It is not just the children who make this place such a blessing. It is the staff who live here and spend every day caring for these kids! The staff are primarily young women, joyful, beautiful and hardworking! Without ever taking a break they cook, clean, wash, scrub, pamper, play and care for every single child! They love them all! They have constant smiles and devotion, and pour out so much selfless

love!

## Can you call me Joe?

We first met Joe several years ago. He was the son of lepers, living in one of the leper's villages surrounding the large city of Chennai. When he was 2 years old he was found tied to a mango tree by the staff. Each day his parents would tie him up to the tree, and go into the city to beg. They left him to fend for himself! When the staff talked to his family, they agreed to allow their son to go to the Little Light's Home.

When the little boy came into the Little Lights home, they asked him his name. He simply responded, "I don't have a name, can you call me Joe?" Today Joe is a thriving 7 year old, going to school, and is safe at Little Lights.



## Leprosy is still a problem...and these religious leaders are working to fight it

Vatican City, Jun 7, 2016 / 03:55 pm (CNA/EWTN News). - While many in the developed world might consider leprosy a thing of the biblical past, the illness – officially called Hansen’s Disease – is still a problem for less-advanced nations coated with social stigma.

In order to address the problem, representatives of the world’s major religions will gather in the Vatican to discuss ending the discrimination and marginalization of those infected with Hansen’s Disease, as well as prevention and treatment research.

“It is a great power to have the leaders from all these major religions get together and talk about leprosy because the leaders from the different religions have the influential power to convince their believers,” Yohei Sasakawa told CNA June 7.

These leaders, he said, will be able to ensure that their believers are aware that Hansen’s Disease is curable, and that the medicine to treat it is being distributed free of charge by various organizations.

Once people are cured of the disease, “it is wrong to discriminate” against them, he said, adding that the general public “should treat these leprosy-affected people as equally as they treat people with disabilities who could be living around them.”

“This is the message that the religious leaders would be able to make in a very influential manner.”

Sasakawa is president of the Nippon Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to carrying out various philanthropic activities. It is among the organizations which distribute medicine free-of-charge to individuals infected with leprosy.

He is also the Japanese government’s Goodwill Ambassador for the Human Rights of People Affected by Leprosy and the World Health Organization’s Goodwill Ambassador for Leprosy Elimination.

Hailing from Japan, Sasakawa spoke during a June 6 news conference detailing the themes and events of an upcoming June 9-10 conference, called “Towards Holistic Care for People with Hansen’s disease, Respectful of their Dignity.”

The conference is set to take place in Rome’s Patristic Institute Augustinianum, and is being organized by both the Pontifical Council for Health Care Workers, the Good Samaritan Foundation and the Nippon Foundation.

While the modern presence of leprosy is widely unknown in advanced cultures, it’s still a problem for developing nations. According to Sasakawa, as many as 16 million people have been cured from the disease since the 1980s.

Roughly 200,000 new cases are discovered each year, the majority of which – about 70 percent – come from India, Brazil and Indonesia. Other cases of infection could exist, but are difficult to find due to the fact that many people in these countries live in remote areas that are either difficult or impossible to access.

In addition to hosting experts, doctors, diplomats and clergy from around the globe, the Vatican conference will also draw interreligious leaders from the world’s main religions – including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism – to discuss the contribution of faith communities in caring for individuals with Hansen’s Disease, as well as ending cultural stigma surrounding the illness.



The event will also welcome 30 individuals who have been cured from the disease, some of whom will share their testimonies of suffering and societal exclusion – at times even from their families – due to misconceptions and cultural prejudices toward those infected with Hansen's Disease.

"The problem with leprosy is that even if these people are cured of this disease, they would still be facing stigma as well as discrimination from society and from the villages where they live, just because they used to be a patient of leprosy," Sasakawa said.

Up until recently, certain countries had laws preventing people with the disease, even those who have been cured, from getting onto trains or public buses. Some laws have even allowed for divorce should one spouse become infected.

In some cases, those affected by leprosy were barred from competing to become a parliamentarian, Sasakawa explained, noting that even today countries make it impossible for those affected by leprosy to immigrate, barring entry for those either sick or cured.

"Many people talk about the disease of leprosy, however there aren't many people who have shaken hands with those patients or the infected people, or who have touched them or who have heard human history directly from these people who experienced that disease," he

said.

The testimonies from cured individuals, then, will be key to ending the stigma surrounding the disease, he said, because many people have never had any real contact with the patients, who often live a "very harsh and painful life throughout their experience" of illness.

"It's not us who should be speaking on behalf of these people, but the patients and the infected people themselves...so that the public would be able to feel more sympathy and show more empathy to these people and their lives of hardship," Sasakawa said.

He voiced his expectation that religious leaders who gather for the conference would cooperate in disseminating the correct information about leprosy, and would spread the message to their faithful that "people should not discriminate against people infected with leprosy."

Sasakawa also voiced his hope that individuals who have already been cured would become more

vocal, rather than staying silent due to the fear of discrimination.

Fr. Jean-Marie Mate Musivi Mupendawatu, secretary of the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Assistance the Health Care Workers, was also present for the news conference.

He told journalists that while there is no scheduled encounter between Pope Francis and conference participants or those who have been cured from leprosy, the Pope is known for his "surprises."

The conclusion of the event will be a Mass celebrated by Pope Francis this Sunday, June 12, for the Jubilee of Sick and Disabled Persons, he said, but added that "there could also be other surprises from Pope Francis. For now we're waiting. We still don't know what surprise" might come.



<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/leprosy-is-still-a-problem-and-these-religious-leaders-are-working-to-fight-it-42440/>

## LEPER COLONY MONEY

Leprosy. It's a disease we seldom hear about, and yet millions of people, perhaps 15 to 30 million, are afflicted with it. Throughout history, lepers have nearly always been shunned, and forced to leave their families and possessions and live apart. Because of this isolation, lepers had to develop their own money, to be used only by lepers.

During the first half of the twentieth century, it was a common practice in many countries, including the U.S., to forcibly confine people with leprosy to special institutions. This was because the disease was believed to be highly contagious.

In some countries, special coins, tokens or paper money were made for use within these institutions, which came to be called "leper colonies." In fact, the United States used special coins at its colonies in the Panama Canal Zone and in the Philippines, when they were under U.S. jurisdiction.

As medical knowledge of the disease advanced, medical experts eventually realized that leprosy could not be spread by handling the so-called "contaminated" money that lepers had touched. In most cases, the special money was discontinued in the 1940s and 1950s. The remaining exam-

ples of it were usually withdrawn and destroyed. Because of this, and because coin collectors were reluctant to handle the coins, most leper colony money today is difficult to find.

Leprosy is now called "Hansen's Disease." And although great strides have been made in the treatment of the disease, we

still hear sick people cry out for being "treated like a leper."

Leper colony coins and tokens serve as stark reminders of a time when people with leprosy were denied their freedom and common human dignity.





Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" And instantly the leprosy disappeared.

- Luke 5:13 (NLT)

[www.studentdevos.com](http://www.studentdevos.com)



## Il-bank tiegħek fil-qalb tal-komunità

L-HSBC huwa l-bank li jinsab fil-qalba tal-komunità tiegħek. B'għarfien internazzjonali u esperjenza lokali, ahna nistghu nghinuk tiehu hsieb ahjar il-finanzi tiegħek. Il-ferghat taghna huma miftuhin kuljum f'diversi lokalitajiet madwar Malta u Ghawdex, b'xi whud mill-ferghat joffru wkoll servizz ta' filghaxija.

Għalhekk ejja żurna u flimkien niddiskutu l-bżonnijiet bankarji tiegħek. L-impjegati taghna, kollha mharrġa fil-*customer service* u mmexxija minn *branch manager* b'esperjenza kbira fil-qasam bankarju jinsabu herqana biex ikunu ta' servizz ghalik.

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[http://stlazarusmalta.org/aff\\_OoC.html](http://stlazarusmalta.org/aff_OoC.html)

The Raoul Follereau Foundation [Malta] - Order of Charity is a non-profit organisation set up in Malta in 1967 with the goal of collecting monetary support for the assistance of lepers throughout the World. It forms part of the international Raoul Follereau Foundation established in 1946 by the world famous anthropologist who died in 1977. The main aims of the Foundation are:

- to encourage social help to those suffering from leprosy;
- to ascertain that these people are treated as they should;
- to help lepers find their place in society;
- to give financial help to leprosaria and missions working with them.

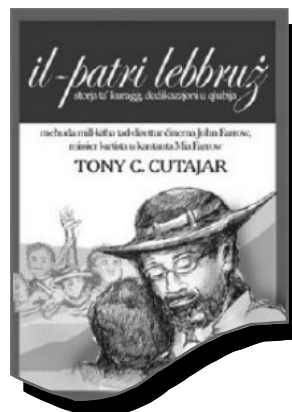


Raoul Follereau

*Help us help fight the scourge of  
leprosy*

## Kif tista int tghin ix-xoghol tal-Ordni tal-Karità

- Billi issir membru tal-ghaqda—dan jiswa biss is-somma ta' €10 fis-sena. Li tkun membru jfisser li tircevi in-newsletter regolari b'mogħod elektroniku jew pubblikata.
- Billi tagħti donazzjoni b'kull ammont li tixtieq int. Sintendi kull donazzjoni tigi rikonnexuta b'rcevuta
- Billi tixtri il-ktieb *Il-Patri Lebbroz* li jipprezenta storja ta' kuragg, dedikazzjoni u qlubija tal-qaddis li gie ddikjarat il-patron tal-presuni morda bil-lebbra. Il-Patri Lebbroz Damjan ta' Molokai kien mar jahdem f'kolonja tal-lebbrozi abbandunati minn kulhadd. Għalihom kien sacerdot, tabib, bennej, mexxej, habib, missier. Fi ftit kliem kien l-ghajn tas-salvazzjoni u t-tama tagħhom. Jum fost l-ohrajn, beda l-omelija tiegħu bil-kliem: "Għez iez huti lebbrozi..." biex hekk qasam mal-kompatrijotti tiegħu fuq il-Ġz ira ta' Molokaj, l-aħbar li hu wkoll kien ittiehed mill-marda. Miet ta' 49 sena. Huwa u gie ddikjarat qaddis sitt snin ilu mill-Papa Benedittu XVI. Il-Ktieb jinbiegħ €6.50 biss inkluss il-posta. Ibghat cekk ta' €6.50 pagabbli lill-Ordni tal-Karita.



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